

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 AID-05 FDRE-00 CIAE-00 COME-00 EB-07

INR-07 LAB-04 NSAE-00 SIL-01 INT-05 NEAE-00 /040 W

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P R 311400Z DEC 75

FM AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 3114

INFO AMCONSUL CALCUTTA

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE NEW DELHI 17442

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: ELAB, IN, US

SUBJECT: INDIAN MINE DISASTER: UMW INQUIRIES

REF: STATE 304657

1. THE FOLLOWING IS PROVIDED FOR THE INFORMATION OF THE
UMW AS REQUESTED IN REFTEL:

(A) NUMBER OF PRESUMED FATALITIES: 372 ACCORDING TO THE GOI.
(B) NUMBER OF DEPENDENTS (WIFE AND CHILDREN) PER FAMILY OF
VICTIM: OUR BEST GUESS IS AN AVERAGE OF SIX (6).
(C) AVERAGE BASIC MONTHLY EARNINGS OF THE VICTIMS: RS. 425.
(U.S. \$1 EQUALS APPROXIMATELY RS. 8.9.)
(D) DEATH BENEFITS AVAILABLE FOR SURVIVING DEPENDENTS:
ALL BENEFITS ARE SINGLE, LUMP SUM PAYMENTS TO THE FAMILIES
OF THE VICTIMS. THEY INCLUDE APPROXIMATELY RS. 10,000
UNDER THE WORKMAN'S COMPENSATION ACT AND VARIOUS SPECIALLY
ANNOUNCED "EX GRATIA" PAYMENTS TOTALLING APPROXIMATELY
RS. 3,000. IN ADDITION, EACH SURVIVING FAMILY WILL
RECEIVE THE WORKER'S "PROVIDENT FUND" COMPENSATION WHICH
DEPENDS UPON THE INDIVIDUAL WORKER'S TOTAL EARNINGS AND
THE NUMBER OF YEARS WORKED. (GIVEN THE COMPARATIVELY LOW
WAGES FOR COAL MINERS PRIOR TO JANUARY 1, 1975, THIS
AMOUNT, WHICH IS THE PRINCIPAL SOCIAL SECURITY BENEFIT,
IS NOT VERY LARGE. THIS LUMP SUM PAYMENT IS FUNDED BY
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EQUAL WORKER AND COMPANY CONTRIBUTIONS: 8 PERCENT OF

THE WORKER'S ANNUAL EARNINGS FROM EACH.)

(E) THE CHASNALA MINE, LIKE MOST MINES AND INDUSTRIES IN INDIA, HAS SEVERAL UNIONS, EACH OF WHICH HAS LEGAL STANDING. HOWEVER, THE INTUC'S FEDERATION, THE INMF, IS BELIEVED TO BE PREDOMINANT. THE CPI'S AITUC CONFEDERATION ALSO IS BELIEVED TO HAVE SOME STRENGTH IN THE CHASNALA MINE.

2. EMBASSY BELIEVES THAT A FINANCIAL CONTRIBUTION FROM THE UMW OR ANY OTHER AMERICAN LABOR FEDERATION WOULD BE MOST WELCOME AND APPRECIATED AS A FRATERNAL GESTURE BY THE INDIAN LABOR MOVEMENT. HOWEVER, ON THE BASIS OF THE GOI'S RELUCTANCE TO ACCEPT AMERICAN EXPERTS TO ASSIST WITH THE RESCUR OPERATIONS, WE ARE CONFIDENT THAT THE GOI WOULD NOT WELCOME A UMW SPONSORED INVESTIGATORY TEAM. THE GOI ANNOUNCED THEY WILL CONDUCT AN INQUIRY INTO THE CAUSES OF THE DISASTER AND

WOULD, IN OUR OPINION, CONSTRUE AN OFFER FOR HELP IN ANY INQUIRY AS OUTSIDE MEDDLING.
SAXBE

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Margaret P. Grafeld
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